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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 TOKYO 004855

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TAGS: [MARR](#) [OVIP](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [JA](#)

SUBJECT: ADMIRAL FALLON'S MEETING WITH FOREIGN MINISTER ASO

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Classified By: Charge d'Affaires a.i. Joe Donovan. Reasons 1.4 (b/d).

¶1. (C) Summary. During an August 23 meeting with Admiral William J. Fallon, Foreign Minister Taro Aso expressed appreciation for the Admiral's efforts to strengthen the U.S.-Japan security alliance and praised the "2 plus 2" statement as a "historical accomplishment in our bilateral relations." Aso applauded the close cooperation and information exchange on North Korea's missile launches and thanked the United States for deploying BMD equipment in Japan. Japan's dispatch of the Self Defense Force (SDF) to Iraq was a successful mission for the individual members as well as the nation, Aso stated. Before leaving, the SDF transferred security authority in its area back to Iraq, and once the United States transfers its security authority to Iraq, the situation will calm down, he predicted. Admiral Fallon thanked Aso for Japan's continued coalition support in Afghanistan and Iraq and urged Japan to consider expanding bilateral coordination in other countries in the Pacific region to improve poor governance and reduce corruption. Aso promised to give the suggestion serious consideration. End Summary.

Realignment

¶2. (C) In a meeting with Admiral William J. Fallon on August 23, 2006, Foreign Minister Taro Aso expressed appreciation for the Admiral's efforts to strengthen the U.S.-Japan security alliance. He noted the necessity of gaining the understanding and cooperation of Japanese communities that host U.S. bases in order to maintain smooth and effective alliance operations. In May 2006, the United States and Japan finalized plans for realignment at a "2 plus 2" in Washington; the plan aims to maintain U.S. deterrence in the region while decreasing the burden on local communities. Aso praised the plan as a "historical accomplishment in our bilateral relations." It is extremely important to deal with various incidents and occurrences in an expeditious and appropriate manner, he continued, adding that U.S. Forces Japan Commander General Bruce Wright had done an excellent

job in managing these situations. Aso expressed hope that our close cooperation on these matters will continue.

Kitty Hawk Replacement and BMD

13. (C) Japan is now working with the United States on plans to replace the USS Kitty Hawk with a nuclear-powered aircraft carrier, Aso pointed out. Yokosuka Mayor Kabaya recently visited San Diego, talked with the U.S. Navy and community leaders and conducted site visits, which proved significant in his ability to assuage local concerns regarding the safety of a nuclear carrier. Regarding Ballistic Missile Defense (BMD), Aso said the latest missile launches by North Korea caused grave concern in Japan. Aso applauded the close military and political cooperation and information exchange prompted by the launches. He thanked the United States for deploying BMD equipment in Japan and said he hoped to promote closer bilateral relations in this area. Geography influences public opinion, he said, explaining Japanese who live on the Sea of Japan are much more sensitive to the North Korea threat than those who live on the Pacific Ocean. Nevertheless, thanks to Kim Jong-il, Japanese public opinion is changing and the public is more willing to accept BMD, he said.

14. (C) Thanking Aso for his strong support in replacing the USS Kitty Hawk, Admiral Fallon noted that the security situation in Northeast Asia requires continuing attention. A lot of work remains to be done to accomplish realignment, including moving the Marines and equipment from MCAS Futenma. The Admiral also promised to work toward the expedient transfer of Marines to Guam, in accordance with the proposed timeline. He agreed that the North Korea missile launches provided an opportunity and praised the ensuing close cooperation between Japanese and U.S. officials. The United

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States and Japan should continue to advance missile defense; a fully operational X-Band radar in Shariki will play a major role, he explained. Aso agreed that the X-Band radar will be mutually beneficial.

Iraq Activities Good for Japan

15. (C) Aso shared that he had visited Japan's Self Defense Forces (SDF) in Iraq and had talked with Iraqi Foreign Minister Zebari. Zebari expressed great appreciation for the SDF because they "harmonized" with the local population in Muthanna Province. All told, Japan sent 5,500 SDF members to Iraq. When the last group returned to Japan, Aso attended the welcome home ceremony with Prime Minister Koizumi and Defense Chief Nukaga. He talked with young soldiers who were very proud to have served in Iraq. Their spirit was very impressive, Aso said. It was a successful mission for them and for Japan. Before leaving, the SDF transferred security authority in its area back to Iraq. Once the United States transfers its security authority to Iraq, the situation will calm down, Aso predicted. While it might take time for Iraq to handle its own security, Aso expressed hope that the transfer could occur soon.

16. (C) Admiral Fallon thanked Aso for Japan's continued coalition support in Afghanistan and Iraq. The Japan Air Self Defense Force C-130 airlifts in Iraq and the supply of fuel to ships in the Indian Ocean are important contributions and are of great benefit. It is helpful to the Iraqis to see that other countries, not only the United States and the UK, are interested and involved. He expressed concern that sectarian violence would make it difficult for Iraq to hold together on its own. While he hoped that the United States would transfer security authority as soon as possible, large obstacles remain.

Expanded Coordination in the Region Key

17. (C) Admiral Fallon urged Aso to consider expanding coordination and cooperation of our assistance programs in other countries in the region. In his regional travels the Admiral had noted many countries plagued by poor governance and corruption. At the same time, Japanese generosity and capacity-building efforts are also evident. In order to create a more stable, secure region, the two countries should consider pooling resources and coordinating efforts, the Admiral encouraged. Aso replied that this was a reasonable idea and promised to give the suggestion serious consideration.

18. (U) Admiral Fallon has cleared this message.
DONOVAN